

**SITUATION REPORT NO. 2**  
**INCIDENT NO. 98-002 (Continuation of 97-015)**  
**DATE: January 22, 1998      TIME: 3:30 p.m.**

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer  
State Capitol  
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: 1997 spring flood statewide.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports.
3. DAMAGES: No change from previous reports.
4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: While local social service agencies fulfill the needs of Grand Forks disaster victims, the North Dakota Disaster Recovery Team has found people with unmet needs located in other North Dakota communities. These areas include Bismarck, Devils Lake, Fargo and Wahpeton. The team, organized to address the unmet needs of flood victims, has received referrals for 39 households, 29 of which were referred by the Individual and Family Grant Program administered by North Dakota Emergency Management. Other referrals came from pastors and disaster-relief agencies.

More than \$300,000 in children's learning materials has been sent by TREND Enterprises of Minneapolis, MN, to Red River Valley flood communities.

The Flood Relief Matchmaking Project, operated by the Bush Foundation of St. Paul, MN, presented \$39,200 to Belmont Elementary School. A New Year's Day fire destroyed four temporary classrooms and a food facility. The temporary classrooms were set up after the April flood damaged the school.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: In his 1998 State of the State Address on January 22, Governor Schafer praised the resilience of North Dakotans to rebuild the state after last year's catastrophic flooding. While disaster recovery is ongoing, Governor Schafer stated that the following steps must be taken to prevent similar widespread damages in the future:
  - Purchase of homes in flood-prone areas along the entire Red River Valley to keep people and property out of the most dangerous places.
  - Completion of a risk assessment of the Red River Valley to pinpoint flood-related risks that might cause problems in future floods.
  - "Disaster proof" registers of deeds offices to protect critical property and tax records.
  - Re-examine floodplain regulations to ensure they are adequate.

The Governor told his audience that a review of the entire state floodplain act and policies used by other states and local governments is underway. He will include recommendations for possible

legislative changes in his presentation to the 1999 Legislature. Governor Schafer stated that North Dakota cannot prevent wind, flood, fire, storm or drought, but its residents can make the state more resistant to the damaging effects of these unavoidable prairie forces.

Governor Schafer received notification on January 14 that North Dakota has been approved for a Secretarial Disaster Designation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The governor requested the designation in early December based on major flooding, excessive precipitation, serious drought, severe heat, insect perils, disease, hail and damaging wind conditions that occurred throughout the state from May 1 through October 31. The North Dakota USDA State Emergency Board reported that the following 45 counties were adversely affected by these disastrous conditions: Adams; Barnes; Benson; Billings; Bottineau; Bowman; Burke; Cass; Cavalier; Divide; Dunn; Eddy; Emmons; Foster; Golden Valley; Grand Forks; Grant; Griggs; Hettinger; Kidder; LaMoure; Logan; McHenry; McIntosh; McKenzie; McLean; Mountrail; Nelson; Pembina; Pierce; Ramsey; Renville; Rolette; Sheridan; Sioux; Slope; Stark; Steele; Stutsman; Towner; Traill; Walsh; Ward; Wells; and, Williams. The following seven counties were named as contiguous counties and are also eligible for disaster assistance: Burleigh; Dickey; Mercer; Morton; Oliver; Ransom; and, Richland.

Officials in North Dakota, Minnesota and Canada are monitoring conditions in the Red River Basin, where data indicates river water flows under ice are above normal for this time of year. The National Weather Service sponsored a 1998 Winter Planning Meeting on January 21 where participants shared Red River-related data. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) reported that Red River water flows are 147 percent above normal at Wahpeton, 203 percent above normal at Fargo and 230 percent above normal at both Grand Forks and Drayton. The Red Lake River, a tributary of the Red River, had water flows 233 percent above normal in Crookston, MN, east of Grand Forks. Another tributary of the Red River, the Wild Rice River at Hedrum, MN, has water flows 385 percent above normal. Sheyenne River water flows under the ice are 316 above normal at West Fargo, while the Pembina River flows at Neche are 265 percent above normal. In western North Dakota, the Souris River had river flows 85 percent above normal at Bantry and 146 percent above normal at Westhope.

The USGS cautioned that these gauges used in the study might be affected by ice level on the rivers. Participants in the meeting included representatives of the N.D. State Water Commission, N.D. Department of Transportation (DOT), North Dakota Emergency Management, Minnesota DOT, Minnesota Emergency Management, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, National Weather Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USGS and Manitoba Water Resources.

The International Joint Commission has issued 40 short-term recommendations to prepare for potential floods in the Red River Basin in the next two years. They include: alerting Red River Basin residents to the reality that there is a statistical probability each year of a flood similar to the 1997 flood; conducting a meeting of senior federal, Canadian, provincial and state officials in each country to undertake policy-level discussions and examination of the flood; increasing liaison among emergency management organizations throughout the Red River Basin; increasing adherence to floodplain management policies and encouraging participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP); implementing flood-proof mitigation measures for individuals and communities; updating and enhancing existing forecast models based on 1997 data and experience; and, monitoring the effects of El Nino on 1998 weather.

On January 12, the one-year anniversary of the first presidential disaster declaration ever issued for severe winter weather, Governor Schafer announced an initiative to plant 100 miles of living snow fences to reduce snow drifting on roads. The initiative could save the state \$1 million annually in snow removal costs and reduce the number of road closures. Last year, the interstate system was closed 11 times because of snow and blizzard conditions. The governor has asked the State Forester to direct the project in conjunction with the Centennial Trees Advisory Commission and the N.D. DOT. The N.D. DOT has identified many areas where snow regularly blocks roadways, including 116 interchanges and grade separations outside urban areas along Interstates 94 and 29. The goal is to complete plantings by December 2001.

Local North Dakota governments have acquired 267 homes as of January 20 as part of the fastest acquisition program in the state's and FEMA's history. The acquisition project is approximately two-

thirds of the way toward its goal of acquiring 391 substantially-damaged properties through local government purchases. Last June, FEMA Director James Lee Witt announced the start of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) with the commitment of \$22.3 million toward acquiring substantially flood-damaged homes in Grand Forks, Fargo and East Grand Forks. FEMA provides 75 percent of the HMGP funds. State and local governments fund the non-federal share. North Dakota Emergency Management administers the program. Additional homes have, and will be, acquired with other funds, such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding.

North Dakota Emergency Management has hired a cultural resource field worker to complete historical evaluations on Grand Forks homes located in floodplains and targeted for acquisition. The HMGP has \$39 million available for projects designed to reduce or eliminate the risk of future flooding. To date, \$26 million has funded acquisition of homes in floodplains and infrastructure projects to include sluice gates flap gates and lift stations.

The state of North Dakota, FEMA and the city of Grand Forks signed an agreement on January 12 that turns over FEMA's manufactured housing program to the state. Under the terms of the agreement, the manufactured housing program transitions from FEMA to the state, and in turn, to Grand Forks, which will assume responsibility for administering the program and managing the First Season and Princeton Parks through the Grand Forks Housing Authority. Cost for administering the program will be covered by FEMA as part of the agreement, and the state will maintain an oversight role. The city has contracted with a local firm to handle day-to-day activities, including maintenance. At the time of the agreement, there were 192 occupied manufactured homes in Grand Forks, including 158 at First Season Park, 28 at Princeton Park, and six at private/commercial sites.

Approximately 150 Grand Forks people, representing five generations, are expected to attend a grass-roots planning session to exchange ideas for commemorating the flooding of Grand Forks. The Crisis Counseling Program of the N.D. Department of Human Services is organizing the meeting. James V. Gambone, author of "Together for Tomorrow: Building the Community Through Intergenerational Dialogue," will help facilitate the meeting.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved a total of \$180.1 million in low-interest loans for businesses and individuals. To date, the SBA has received 11,697 loan applications, 6,938 of which have been approved. Of the loans, 54 percent were to home owners and renters for real estate and personal property losses, and 46 percent were to business owners for repairs to businesses and for lost income.

To date, 24,471 awards have been approved for more than \$53.8 million in Disaster Housing assistance provided by FEMA.

The Individual and Family Grant Program (IFGP), administered by North Dakota Emergency Management, has approved more than \$14 million in grants to individuals for flood losses. The average IFGP grant is \$1,336. The staff has closed 23,238 cases. Of the more than 23,000 IFGP applications processed for grant awards, only 15 have been appealed by the applicant.

As of January 21, the FEMA and State Emergency Management Public Assistance staff have received 4,199 Damage Survey Reports (DSRs) and have obligated funds for 3,652 DSRs. Survey work has been completed for 429 applicants for the 1997 flood. More than \$115.7 million in infrastructure repairs, emergency work and debris removal has been determined to be eligible statewide.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: The next State/Federal meeting will be held February 11 at 1:30 p.m. at The Adjutant General's conference room at Fraine Barracks, Bismarck.

Other web site addresses for flood recovery information include:

N.D. Division of Emergency Management: <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>  
N.D. League of Cities: <http://www.ndlc.org>  
N.D. State Water Commission: <http://water.swc.state.nd.us>  
N.D. Attorney General Office: <http://www.state.nd.us/ndag>  
N.D. Department of Agriculture: <http://www.state.nd.us/agr/>  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: <http://www.ncs-wc.usace.army.mil>  
U.S. Geological Survey: <http://srv1dndbmk.cr.usgs.gov/public/index.html>

---

Douglas C. Friez, State Director